



Consumer Handbook

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is to provide comprehensive services to people with disabilities which will maximize their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency in the community.

This is accomplished through the multiple programs of the MRC: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services, Community Services (CS) and Disability Determination Services (DDS).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal mandate which, in part, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities when getting and keeping employment. Massachusetts state law also prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities when getting and keeping employment.

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MRC is grateful for the dedication of all of the Handbook Committee members for their hard work on this important project.

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Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program Consumer Handbook

- Do you have difficulty obtaining a job?
- Do you have difficulty keeping a job?

The MRC Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program works with people to help them obtain and retain employment.

Who Can Receive Services?

To receive vocational rehabilitation services from the MRC-VR Program, you must:

1. have a physical, mental, emotional or learning disability(ies) which severely limits your ability to get and keep a job.
2. have a desire to work and keep a job.
3. be of legal working age.

How Do I Get A Referral?

People with disabilities come to the MRC-VR Program from any variety of sources or you can refer yourself.

How Do I Prepare For The First Interview?

To get started, please:

1. Call and/or visit a MRC-VR office.
2. Attend an orientation provided at an office.
3. Fill out the "VR CHECKLIST" found in the center of this Handbook, if possible. (See Appendix C)

How Does My Rehabilitation Begin?

Soon after your referral is received at an MRC-VR office, you will be contacted by a VR staff person or counselor who will work with you. He or she will send you a letter giving the date and time of

your appointment and with the name of a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor whom you will meet. If the date and/or time are inconvenient, please call the counselor who sent you the letter to arrange for a more convenient appointment, including information regarding the best way you can be reached.

A vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor will meet with you at the designated time. He or she is a highly qualified professional who is trained to work with persons with disabilities to develop a plan to meet specific career goals, such as yours. The VR counselor will work with you and list your strengths, identify any limitations, discuss the barriers to employment presented by your disability, determine with you the services necessary to help you achieve your goals and assist you in entering or re-entering the world of work.

It will be very helpful to bring recent medical, school and other records with you to the first appointment, along with your completed VR CHECKLIST, if possible.

Preparing For the First Interview

It will also be very helpful to you and your counselor if you prepare ahead of time to discuss certain information about your background. Your counselor will need to know some facts about your disability such as dates of any hospitalizations, specialty examinations, clinic visits, or anything else about the nature of your disability. You may bring someone along with you to this meeting, if you wish.

The VR CHECKLIST found in the center of this Handbook might be useful to help you to organize this information.

Because vocational rehabilitation is ultimately about jobs, your counselor will need to know about any work history or special skills you might have. School records, job history, training or other information will be very helpful. Don't worry if you have never worked. Many people with disabilities seek assistance from the MRC-VR Program to enter the world of work for the first time.

In addition to learning more about you, the counselor will tell you more about the MRC-VR Program, such as:

- determining how a person becomes eligible for services,
- describing what the vocational rehabilitation process includes,
- explaining the types of services possible,
- stating your rights and responsibilities and answering any questions you might ask.

Applying For Services

At the end of your first interview, if you believe the services of the MRC-VR Program will help lead you to a job, you may choose to sign an application for services.

What Happens Next?

Your VR counselor's first task, after you have formally applied for services, is to determine if you are eligible to receive services from the MRC-VR Program. Being determined eligible is not automatic. The VR counselor needs to gather a variety of information to determine the nature of your disability(ies) and the barrier(s) to employment, as well as determine whether you can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. In order for the counselor to gather this information, he or she may ask you to give written permission to collect diagnostic information about you. The information the counselor gathers is strictly confidential and is shared only with those who are directly concerned with your vocational rehabilitation. While this information is necessary to determine your eligibility, it is also very useful information for you and your counselor to decide what services will be best for you as you both develop a rehabilitation plan, should you be determined eligible.

Another piece of the eligibility determination is your availability to receive VR services, either by being close to graduating from high school or of working age.

What Will We Talk About?

You and your counselor will explore goals, expectations, skills, education, experience, medical conditions and anything else that may be keeping you from working.

Your counselor may want to obtain more records from other agencies or organizations with which you may have worked. Remember that all this information will be very helpful as you develop your work goals.

Becoming Eligible for Services

Within 60 days after you have signed your application, you will be notified in writing that you are either eligible or ineligible to receive services.

When you are notified of your eligibility, you will also be assigned to a priority category. Priority categories are based on how significant your disability is and your barriers to employment. Only individuals who are eligible and are in the top priority category can receive the full range of MRC-VR services.

If you are not in the top priority category, you will receive referral and information services only. You can also appeal your priority category assignment if you believe it is incorrect. You may then contact the MRC Ombudsperson and/or the Client Assistance Program (CAP) in the Massachusetts Office on Disability (see page 8). **You have the right to appeal the eligibility decision, as well as any other decisions, through an Administrative Review, Mediation and/or Fair Hearing processes.**

What's the Next Step?

You and your counselor will begin a series of appointments. Every service that is provided is based on your skills, ability, needs and preferences.

As the planning process begins, your counselor will discuss with you two other considerations:

- A.. Waiting List for Paid Services: sometimes the MRC-VR Program has a waiting list for services the agency needs to purchase. Your counselor will inform you whether or not there is a wait for any of the services you might be seeking.
- B. Financial Need: the MRC-VR Program must ask you about any income you have to determine if you can assist in paying for any of your services. If you are dependent on your parents for income or if you are married, your parents' or spouse's income may also be considered.

During the planning process, your counselor will ask for your cooperation in seeking other funding that might help pay for some of your services, such as financial aid for schools and MassHealth to cover medical costs.

“Informed Choice” Decision Making

You will be asked to make decisions about choosing what kind of job you want and what services you need to get and keep that job. Informed Choice means that you have obtained all the information you need to make choices and decisions for yourself about the job you want and the services you need. Your counselor will be very helpful to you in gathering all the information you need. Your counselor will also assist you in making decisions if you need help. Basically, you and your counselor will work as partners throughout the rehabilitation process by gathering information and helping you in your decision-making about job goals and service options.

It is most important to know about all the services that are available for you to get and keep a job. If you are found eligible, you and your counselor will explore the various services to help you know more about your strengths and weaknesses.

Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

Developing and agreeing on an IPE is the most important time for you. The more you know about your strengths, the more you will be able to make good informed decisions about your future at work. **(Your IPE charts the course of your services and must be the result of work by you and your counselor.)**

What is an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)? It is a document in which you and your counselor list your employment goal and what services MRC can provide to help you to become employed. It is an agreement between you and the MRC-VR Program. When you agree to this goal, you and your counselor must both sign the IPE. You will receive a copy of the IPE and should keep it for your records.

The Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) which you and your counselor have developed together outlines your employment goal and the specific individual services which you will need to get and keep a job.

These services may be provided directly by the MRC-VR Program, purchased for you, or arranged for you with other organizations. By the time you are ready to sign your IPE you will know your exact employment goal and what services you will be receiving that are included in your plan.

REMINDER BEFORE SIGNING:

IF YOU DISAGREE WITH ANY PARTS OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE), YOU AND YOUR COUNSELOR SHOULD DISCUSS THESE DISAGREEMENTS.

YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL.

Following Your Plan for Employment

Once you and your counselor sign your IPE, the next steps are carried out as defined in your plan. As you begin to work toward your goal of getting a job, you and your counselor will meet periodically to discuss your progress and to discuss anything about your rehabilitation.

If you need to talk with your counselor at any time during your rehabilitation, you should feel free to contact him or her. Open communication with one another is important. If something happens that slows down your progress, contact your counselor immediately. You most likely will have important information to share. There may be some reasonable accommodations, equipment or services that could help you resolve the problem(s).

Getting and Keeping a Job

As the services in your IPE come to a close, you and your counselor will be discussing going to work. During this time, you will be preparing to go on job interviews, designing a resume and learning techniques about interviewing for a job. You and your counselor will work together in this very important step - getting a job!

How Do I Keep My Job?

If you have difficulty on the job, notify your counselor immediately so that he or she can assist you. Your counselor will assist you with any difficulties such as: transportation, reasonable accommodations, additional training and support services like job coaching to help you on the job. It is important that you understand what your employer expects of you and if you choose to disclose your disability, that your employer understands how your disability affects your performance.

How Will This Affect My Benefits?

Information concerning such benefits as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), Food Stamps, Personal Assistance Services (PAS), health benefits, and other benefits are areas where your counselor can assist you.

Exercising Your Rights

You may seek resolution of problems or disagreements about your rehabilitation services by contacting your counselor, counselor's supervisor, and/or the office manager. You have a right to appeal any action or inaction affecting your rehabilitation services. You must make a written request for appeal within 30 days of being notified of a change in or denial of services. You may also obtain help with resolving problems by contacting:

- The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission "Ombudsperson" by calling (617) 204-3603, toll free 1-800-245-6543, or writing
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
27 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210-1616.
- The Customer Relations Coordinator
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
27 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210-1616
or by calling (617) 204-3602.
- The Massachusetts Office on Disability, Consumer Assistance Program (617) 727-7440, toll free 1-800-322-2020, which may assist you in the appeals process and serve as your advocate.

**ANOTHER WAY TO VIEW THE MRC
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM
PROCESS: FLOWCHART**

MRC VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PROCESS TO ENTER OR BE IN THE PROGRAM AS A CONSUMER	"SAFEGUARDS" FOR THE CONSUMER/RIGHTS OF THE CONSUMER
Referral to the MRC-Vocational Rehabilitation Program.	In the event you do not want to be referred, you do not have to move to the next stage: Application.
Orientation to the MRC-Vocational Rehabilitation Program.	If you find that the MRC Program is not for you, you can withdraw, anytime.
Application, by you, to the MRC-Vocational Rehabilitation Program.	You choose to apply.
Interview with an MRC-VR counselor to determine eligibility and gather information from you and answer your questions.	You can always request to speak to a Supervisor or the Area Director if you have an issue about which you feel your Counselor is not being helpful.
(If there is a question about your eligibility, you and your counselor can agree to extend the period for determining eligibility beyond sixty days.)	(Anywhere in the process, you can request advice and/or assistance from the Counselor's Supervisor or from the MRC Ombudsperson and/or from the Mass. Office on Disability's Client Assistance Program, if your VR counselor cannot be of assistance.)

Development of your Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) (formerly Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan.)	This is the point where you have an employment goal and have prepared a list of services you think you need to attain entry level, part-time or full-time employment. If you desire to have an advocate and/or family member with you at this point in the process...or at any point in the process...just let your VR Counselor know that fact.
(You will be required to use a "comparable benefit" if one is available for the service(s) you seek from the MRC. like a college scholarship, if available.)	(If you and your VR Counselor disagree on your goal or the services to be placed, in writing, in your IPE, you have the right to Appeal.)
Activation of your IPE.	You can negotiate to amend your IPE.
You become "ready for employment".	You have to agree to that fact.
You enter part or full time employment.	You can still rely on your VR Counselor for advice, job seeking assistance and for additional services, if you need more services.
You become a Graduate of the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program!	You may receive "post employment services" or reenter the Program to maintain or retain employment or to attain a new employment goal.

APPENDIX A

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable Accommodation: A change in your work situation based upon an agreement between the employer and employee with a disability, covering a necessary modification or assistive technology enabling the person to perform essential parts of the job.

Some persons with disabilities may need changes at their place of work that are reasonable for employers to provide. You can discuss what changes you may need to remain employed with your rehabilitation counselor.

APPENDIX B

OTHER MRC SERVICES

Assistive Technology - is a service available to eligible consumers of the MRC-VR program who request an evaluation or equipment to assist them in functioning while in a training program leading to work, or at work, Assistive Technology is also available to eligible Community Services consumers to assist them as part of their independent living program. Devices may include computers, rehabilitation and assistive technology for daily living and/or employment.

Van Modification - is a service to MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program consumers who are **ready** to enter work. The consumer usually has his/her own van which the MRC will modify so he/she is able to enter and exit the vehicle and to be a passenger or driver, in the case where he or she has a physical disability.

Home Modification - is for the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Services Program consumers who, based on their physical limitations, need modification to their residence in order to enter and exit and to have full access to the lavatory.

(For more detailed information call (617) 204-3855 (V) or (617) 204-3835 (TDD).)

APPENDIX C

VR CHECKLIST

Please fill out this checklist and bring it or a copy with you to your first appointment. Also bring the most current medical records which document your disability (ies). Thank you very much!

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Please indicate if you receive any of the following benefits:

Medicaid _____ Medicare _____ TAFDC _____

Food Stamps _____ Subsidized Housing _____ EAEDC _____

Workers Comp. _____ Blue Cross _____

Other Insurance or HMO/PPO _____

Social Security* SSI _____ SSDI _____ Both _____

*If you receive any of these benefits, please bring documentation with you to your first VR meeting.

Please list below the professionals who have treated you for your disabilities within the last 5 years:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone #</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What effect do your disabilities have which make it difficult for you to get or keep a job?

Are you currently taking any medications as a result of your disability(ies)? If yes, please list them below:

Do you use a cane, brace, wheelchair, hearing aid, or other assistive device? If yes, please specify:

Have you ever been told that you have Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder? When? By whom?

Please list any other information you think may be helpful to your counselor in assisting you to go to work.

APPENDIX D

MRC-VR AREA OFFICES

Listed below are the VR area offices and the towns and cities they cover. You may receive vocational rehabilitation services from any area office, even when the area office you choose is not listed as the service provider for the town or city where you live.

Greater Brockton

55 City Hall Plaza
Brockton, MA 02301
(508) 583-1530 (V)
(508) 580-9816 (TDD)
(508) 427-5788 (FAX)

Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Holbrook, Rockland, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman

Greater Brookline

320 Washington Street, 2nd Floor
Brookline, MA 02445
(617) 739-9080 (V) (TDD)
(617) 232-9256 (FAX)

Allston, Brighton, Brookline, Jamaica Plain, Newton, and West Roxbury

Greater Cape & Islands

77 High School Road Ext.
Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 862-6600 (V)
(508) 775-6173 (TDD)
(508) 790-4926 (FAX)

Barnstable, Bourndale, Bourne, Brewster, Buzzards Bay, Cataumet,

Centerville, Chatham, Chilmark, Chilton, Cotuit, Dennis,
Dennisport,
East Sandwich, Edgartown, Falmouth, Forestdale, Gay Head,
Gosnold, Harwich, Hyannis, Marston Mills, Mashpee,
Monument Beach, Nantucket, Oak Bluffs, Orleans, Osterville,
Pocasset, Provincetown, Sagamore,
Sandwich, Teaticket, Tisbury, Truro, Wellfleet, West
Barnstable, West Dennis, West Tisbury, Woods Hole, and
Yarmouth

Greater Downtown Boston

59 Temple Place, Suite 905
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 357-8137 (V) (TDD)
(617) 482-5576 (FAX)

Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Charlestown, Chelsea, Dorchester,
Downtown, East Boston, Kenmore Square, North End, Revere,
South Boston, South End, West End, and Winthrop

Greater Fall River

170 Pleasant Street Room 300
Fall River, MA 02721
(508) 678-9041 (V) (TDD)
(508) 676-2734 (FAX)

Assonet, East Freetown, Fall River, Freetown, Somerset,
Swansea, and Westport

Greater Fitchburg

76 Summer Street Room 330
Fitchburg, MA 01420
(978) 345-1713 (V) (TDD)
(978) 343-6949 (FAX)

Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Barre, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton,
Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Hardwick, Harvard, Hubbardston,
Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, New Braintree, Oakham,
Pepperell, Princeton, Rutland, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton,
Townsend, Westminster, and Winchendon

Greater Greenfield

238 Main Street
Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-2326 (V) (TDD)
(413) 774-4654 (FAX)

Amherst, Ashfield, Athol, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont,
Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Goshen,
Greenfield, Hadley, Hatfield, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Leydon,
Monroe, Montague,
New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Pelham, Petersham,
Philipston, Plainfield, Rowe, Royalston, Shelburn, Shutesbury,
Sunderland, Warwick, Wendall, Whately, and Williamsburg

Greater Holyoke

187 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 536-8200 (V) (TDD)
(413) 533-5022 (FAX)

Belchertown, Chesterfield, Chicopee, Easthampton, Granby,
Holyoke,
Ludlow, Middlefield, Monson, Northampton, Palmer, South
Hadley,
Southampton, Ware, Westhampton, Worthington

Greater Lawrence

One Parker Street, 2nd Floor
South Lawrence, MA 01843
(978) 685-1731 (V) (TDD)
(978) 975-9907 (FAX)

Amesbury, Andover, Boxford, Byfield, Georgetown, Groveland,
Haverhill, Lawrence, Merrimack, Methuen, Newbury,
Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, West
Newbury, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton,
Ipswich, Manchester, Rockport, Topsfield, Wareham, Beverly,
Salem,
Peabody

Greater Lowell

325 Chelmsford Street, #4
Lowell, MA 01851
(978) 458-4544 (V) (TDD)
(978) 937-9879 (FAX)

Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Lowell, Tewksbury,
Tyngsboro, and Westford

Greater Malden

157 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
(781) 324-7160 (V) (TDD)
(781) 388-9345 (FAX)

Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading,
Stoneham, and Wakefield

Greater Milford

100 Medway Road, Suite 102
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 792-7750 (V) (TDD)
(508) 634-0746 (FAX)

Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Franklin, Grafton, Hopedale,
Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton,
Uxbridge, and Whitinsville

Greater Natick

251 West Central Street, Suite 25
Natick, MA 01760
(508) 651-7531 (V) (TDD)
(508) 655-8799 (FAX)

Ashland, Dover, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson,
Marlboro, Natick, Needham, Northborough, Sherborn,
Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough,
and Weston

Greater New Bedford

888 Purchase Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 993-6255 (V) (TDD)
(508) 979-8554 (FAX)

Acushnet, Buzzards Bay, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion,
Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Onset, Rochester, and Wareham

Greater North Adams

85 Main Street, Suite 426
North Adams, MA 01247
(413) 663-5391 (V) (TDD)
(413) 664-7963 (FAX)

Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock,
Lanesborough,
New Ashford, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown

Greater Pittsfield

6 Clinton Avenue
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-2720 (V) (TDD)
(413) 443-4835 (FAX)

Alford, Becket, Egremont, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale,
Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Marlborough, Otis,
Peru,
Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Sheffield, Tyrringham,
West Stockbridge, Washington, Windsor

Greater Plymouth

40 Industrial Pk. Rd., Suite 206
Plymouth, MA 02360
(508) 747-5922 (V) (TDD)
(508) 830-1899 (FAX)

Carver, Duxbury, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Kingston,
Marshfield,
Pembroke, Plymouth, and Plympton

Greater Quincy

275 Hancock Street, 2nd Floor
North Quincy, MA 02171
(617) 471-1600 (V) (TDD)
(617) 770-1893 (FAX)

Braintree, Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, Milton, Norwell, Quincy,
Randolph, Scituate, and Weymouth

Greater Roxbury

40 Dimock Street, 3rd Floor
Roxbury, MA 02119
(617) 442-5510 (V) (TDD)
(617) 442-5724 (FAX)

Hyde Park, Mattapan, North Dorchester, Roslindale, Roxbury,
and
South End

Greater Salem

45 Congress Street, Building #3
Salem, MA 01970
(978) 745-8085 (V) (TDD)
(978) 745-9063 (FAX)

Beverly, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lynn,
Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Middleton, Nahant,
Peabody, Salem,
Saugus, Swampscot, Topsfield, and Wenham

Greater Somerville

5 Middlesex Avenue, 3rd Floor
Somerville, MA 02145
(617) 776-2662 (V) (TDD)
(617) 776-1331 (FAX)

Belmont, Cambridge, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, Lynn,
Nahant, Marblehead, Swampscott, Danvers, Middleton

Greater Springfield

1 Federal Street, Bldg. 102-1
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 736-7296 (V) (TDD)
(413) 737-5693 (FAX)

Agawam, Blanford, Chester, East Longmeadow, Granville,
Hampden, Huntington, Longmeadow, Montgomery, Russell,
Southwick, Springfield, Tolland, Westfield, West Springfield,
and Wilbraham

Greater Sturbridge

57 Main Street
Sturbridge, MA 01566
(508) 347-7661 (V) (TDD)
(508) 347-5743 (FAX)

Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, Dudley, East Brimfield, East Brookfield, Holland, North Brookfield, Oxford, Southbridge, Spencer, Sturbridge, Wales, Warren, Webster, and West Brookfield

Greater Taunton

21 Spring Street, 1st Floor
Taunton, MA 02780
(508) 823-8141 (V)
(508) 821-3797 (TDD)
(508) 821-3796 (FAX)

Attleboro, Berkley, Dighton, Lakeville, Mansfield,
Middleborough,
North Attleboro, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Seekonk, and
Taunton

Greater Walpole

55 West Street, 1st Floor
Walpole, MA 02081
(508) 668-8912 (V) (TDD)
(508) 668-9655 (FAX)

Canton, Dedham, Foxboro, Medfield, Millis, Norfolk, Norwood,
Plainville, Sharon, Walpole, Westwood, and Wrentham

Greater Worcester

359 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 754-1757 (V) (TDD)
(508) 799-7576 (FAX)

Auburn, Boylston, Holden, Leicester, Paxton, Shrewsbury,
West Boylston, and Worcester

Statewide Employment Services

27 Wormwood Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02210
(617) 204-3854 (V)
(617) 204-3834 (TDD)
(617) 727-2793 (FAX)

APPENDIX E

COMMUNITY SERVICES (CS) PROGRAM

Independent Living Services Program (also known as Part B services) - a program of supports for individuals with severe disabilities requiring such supports to become more independent in family and community. Services include but are not limited to home modifications, vehicle modifications, assistive technology, etc. The MRC program does not have any age limitations and provides services to individuals other than those eligible for services from the Commission for the Blind. There is a financial means test for services for individuals who have income other than SSI. Intake for services and services coordination is conducted through your local IL Center or the CS Program at (617) 204-3851.

Independent Living Center Services - community-based not-for-profit organizations providing a variety of services such as information and referral, peer counseling, skills training and advocacy utilizing a “peer role modeling approach” for people with all types of disabilities. These services assist persons with disabilities to be as independent and self reliant as possible in their family and community. There are no restrictions with regard to age or income for “core” services. For more information contact the CS Program at (617) 204-3851 or 1-800-223-2559.

Adult Supported Living Program - a program of community based service coordination supports to allow individuals with severe physical disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own house or apartment. Service coordination provides only those supports that the individual cannot carry out without assistance such as bill paying or managing personal care assistants. Eligibility includes a requirement that the individual have a severe physical disability accompanied by other sensory, cognitive or emotional limitations, presence of a mobility impairment, Mass. residency, ability to tolerate the emotional stresses of community living, and must be 18 years or older. For more information contact the CS Program at (617) 204-3851 or 1-800-223-2559.

Turning 22 IL Program - a program of community based services and supports to assist youth with disabilities exiting special education services to transition to adult human services. This process begins with the development and approval of an Individual Service Plan that identifies

the individual's services needs, costs and agency responsible. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Independent Living Services Program provides planning and services for those individuals with severe physical disabilities with accompanying sensory, cognitive or emotional limitations and who have a mobility impairment and are not otherwise eligible for transition services from other Executive Office of Health and Human Services agencies. For more information contact the CS Program at (617) 204-3851 or 1-800-223-2559.

Housing Registry Program - a program of information for individuals with disabilities on the availability of accessible, affordable housing in the community. The MASS ACCESS registry lists all public housing units in the state and identifies if they are vacant and lists other features important to people with disabilities. The information is updated daily and is accessed through the Independent Living Centers statewide. There is no charge for the services. For more information contact your local IL Center or the CS Program at (617) 204-3851 or 1-800-223-2559.

Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) - staff are experienced professionals who work with individuals with brain injury and their families/significant others to access programs, services and resources necessary for rehabilitation and community life. Eligible SHIP applicants may have access to a wide variety of programs and services dependent upon availability of the service, geographic accessibility and availability of fiscal resources. You may be eligible if you:

- are a Massachusetts resident, regardless of age,
- have a documented externally caused traumatic brain injury,
- have resulting impairments in behavioral, cognitive and/or physical functioning, and
- are able to participate in community-based services.

For more information, contact SHIP:

617-204-3852 (V)

617-204-3817 (TDD)

1-800-223-2559 (Toll Free)

Home Care Assistance Program (HCAP) - is a state funded program providing homemaking services to eligible consumers with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59 who live alone or with another person with a disability. Eligible applicants may have minor children living with them, under the age of 18. Individuals must be functionally limited in their own nutritional and environmental needs. The assistance of a homemaker helps individuals maintain their independence in the community.

In order to receive HCAP services, individuals must:

- Have a disabling condition which prevents them from performing one or more homemaking tasks.
- Require homemaking assistance to prevent hospitalization or institutionalization.
- Meet MRC-HCAP financial guidelines.
- Be living alone or with another disabled individual, although they may have minor children under age 18.
- Be between the ages of 18 and 59.
- Not be legally blind since the Mass. Commission for the Blind has their own Homemaking Program for individuals with visual disabilities.

Homemaking services are defined as direct assistance with: Meal Preparation, Grocery Shopping, Medication Pick-Up, Laundry, and Light Housekeeping.

Homemakers do not perform: Heavy Chores, Babysitting, Spring Cleaning, Assistance with Moving, Financial Management, Companionship, Medication Monitoring or Personal Care.

For more information, contact the Home Care Assistance Program at (617) 204-3853 or 1-800-223-2559.

Protective Services Program-Protective Services are provided to individuals with disabilities who have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused, or neglected, by a caretaker. These services range from emergency respite shelter and assistance in obtaining restraining orders, to case management. Services are provided twenty four hours a day. Anyone who suspects that a person with a disability has been abused can report the information anonymously to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission Hotline at 1-800-426-9009. The names of individuals who make reports will not be released.

Statewide Employment Services (SES) - now part of the Community Services Program, SES provides services and supports to assist people with significant disabilities who are underserved and may need long term assistance to obtain and retain meaningful community-based employment, such as:

Information: identification of programs and resources available and assistance to individuals to obtain needed services for employment.

Employment Coordination: assistance in planning and coordinating resources to meet the individual's needs in order to obtain and maintain employment.

Community Based Employment: a range of services, including supported employment.

Extended Employment: a work situation for individuals with significant disabilities where supervision is provided by a VR provider.

Technical Assistance: service providers, schools, public agency staff, consumers, advocate groups and parents can receive assistance to develop or obtain employment services for people with disabilities.

Dissemination of Resource Information: acts as a clearinghouse regarding information about Community Based Employment.

APPENDIX F

MRC-DDS PROGRAM

What is DDS?

DDS stands for **Disability Determination Services**, the MRC program charged with the task of determining who is eligible for disability status and disability benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), in accordance with the Social Security Administration (SSA) guidelines. All disability-related requests to SSA, for children or adults, are processed by the MRC-DDS Program.

Who Does These Determinations in Massachusetts?

In Massachusetts, all disability claims, reviews, and hearings are performed by the MRC Disability Determination Services (DDS). This Program has employees who are specially trained by SSA, DDS and the MRC to provide priority service through prompt and equitable disability determinations.

General Information and Telephone Numbers

Listed below are the telephone numbers of MRC's administrative offices and other statewide services. These numbers are accessible by voice (V) or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD).

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

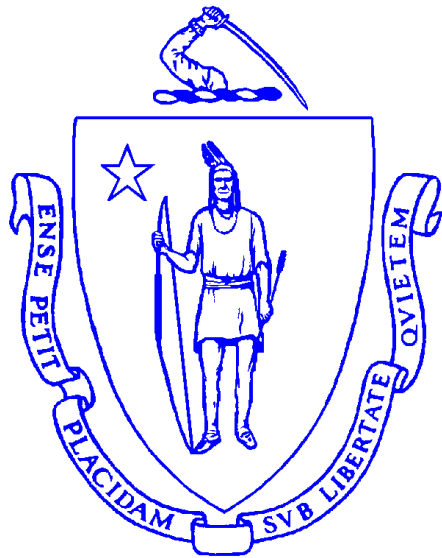
General Information/Reception	617-204-3600 (V) 617-204-3868 (TDD)
Administrative Services	617-204-3860 (V) 617-204-3865 (TDD)
MA Toll Free Number	1-800-245-6543 (V)
Main Fax Number	617-727-1354
MRC Commissioner	617-204-3600 (V)
MRC Chief of Staff	617-204-3608 (V)
VR Deputy Commissioner	617-654-7400
VR Program Toll Free Number	1-800-245-6543 (V)
CS Deputy Commissioner	617-204-3850 (V) 617-204-3867 (TDD)
CS Program Toll Free Number	1-800-223-2559 (V)
DDS Deputy Commissioner	617-654-7400 (V/TDD) 1-800-882-2040 (V)
DDS Program Toll Free Number	1-800-223-3212 (TDD)
Legal Department	617-204-3610 (V) 617-204-3816 (TDD)
Consumer Involvement	617-204-3851 (V) 617-204-3851 (TDD) 1-800-223-2559 (V)
Customer Relations	617-204-3602 (V)
Ombudsperson	617-204-3603 (V) 617-204-3868 (TDD) 1-800-245-6543 (V)
Massachusetts Relay Service	1-800-439-2370 (TDD) 1-800-439-0183 (V)
MRC Website	www.mass.gov/mrc

8/01, rev. 6/03

Mitt Romney, Governor

Kerry Healey, Lieutenant Governor

Ronald Preston, Secretary, EOHHS



Elmer C. Bartels, Commissioner
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
27 Wormwood Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02210-1616
WWW.MASS.GOV/MRC